

tional states, with a maniacal outburst followed by depression culminating in suicide, furnished a clinical picture which must have been the result of experience. He compared it with the description of confusional insanity in a modern text-book. For accuracy in clinical detail Dr. Auden considered the Greek tragedian superior to Shakespeare, and claimed him as the first of the long line of physician-poets, extending down to our own day, as exemplified in the present laureate.

Dr. T. B. Hyslop thought that the case of Ajax in a modern court of law would come under the M'Naghten rules, though whether the legal mind would properly assess it was doubtful. Sophocles was always interesting for his intimate knowledge of clinical psychology. Professor G. M. Robertson said that the description of the symptoms of confusional insanity was about as perfect as it could be. If any student gave such a description as that given by Sophocles he would get full marks. (Trans. Royal Med. Psychological Ass., *Brit. Med. Jour.*, July 17, 1926.)

MEDIÆVAL MEDICINE

An excellent epitome has been made from the four volumes already published of Mr. R. T. Gunther's larger work, "Early Science in Oxford," in order that a large number of students for whom the cost of the original book was prohibitive may have an opportunity of studying some of the subjects therein mentioned. The present work* is in seven chapters dealing respectively with Early Medicine, Medicine in the Seventeenth Century and After, Anatomy, Physiology, Zoology, Botany, and Geology. The book is of size handy to read, admirably printed, has many illustrations, and is altogether delightful. Mr. Gunther has a wonderful flair for extracting gems from the various ancient mines in which he has been working, and many of them show how true is the aphorism that there is nothing new under the sun. For instance, the following excerpt, taken from the diaries of one

Simon Forman (1552-1611), of Magdalen College, puts modern professors of rejuvenation in the shade: "and myselfe did boill 2 snakes in my strong water when I distilled it and after I drank of that water and yt made me to be fresh and take away all my gray hairs when I was 56 yers old and many toke me not to be above 40 or 42." Another would, if he reads it, make Sir Arthur Conan Doyle extremely envious. It concerns a Fellow of Trinity, by name Th. Allen (1542-1632), noted for his skill in mathematics and astrology. The vulgar looked upon him as a magician and his servitor would tell them "that he met the spirits coming up the stairs like bees." Few outside the medical profession, or we might even say within it, know that the architect of St. Paul's was the same Dr. Christopher Wren, Fellow of All Souls, to whom are due the beautiful anatomical drawings in illustration of Willis's work on the brain, and that he was also the originator of intravenous injections. The discovery of a method of injecting bodies with a solidifying fluid is due to Boyle, as also the method of keeping moist anatomical preparations in spirit. Richard Lower, a pupil of Willis, studied the anatomy of the heart (1669) and left some accurate drawings showing the spiral arrangement of the muscular fibres, a fact almost forgotten until its revival by Pettigrew. Robert Hooke, of Christ Church (1635-1702), who was not only a skilled microscopist but an architect of no mean talents (he built the new buildings of Bethlehem Hospital in 1675), was the first to record that the blue colour in a peacock's tail has no real existence, but is due to "a texture visible under the microscope"—i.e., is due to interference, though, of course, he did not know the reason. These quotations may suffice to indicate the interest of Mr. Gunther's book. Of the series of postcards issuing from the same press, two especially are worthy of note; the one (dated 1631) shows the Castle of Health attacked by flying evils; an early forecast of microbial invasion; the other (dated 1660) is an amputation scene from a window in the Bodleian. The patient is seated in a chair placidly regarding the operator, who is removing his leg with a hack-saw, no preliminary incision of the soft parts having apparently been made.

* Early Medical and Biological Science; extracted from *Early Science in Oxford*, by R. T. Gunther, M.A., LL.D. Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford. 1926. Pp. 246. 7s. 6d.